

Visit The Trails - East

Santa Fe, Oregon, and California Trails



Santa Fe, Oregon, and California
National Historic Trails

Santa Fe Trail Association
Oregon-California Trails Association
City of Gardner
National Park Service

A Look Back in Time

The Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails once passed this way. Heavy freight wagons lumbering to and from New Mexico, and emigrant families and gold seekers heading west to Oregon and California all shared this route from Independence and Kansas City. The trails split here at Gardner Junction.

Preserving the Past for the Future

The Santa Fe, Oregon, and California trails' designations as national historic trails has led to increased awareness and protection. It has also opened opportunities for visitors to experience the routes and related sites. Museums, visitor centers, and tour routes

along the trails provide maps, brochures, and other information to assist with your travel plans.

These exhibits are the first in a series along the Auto Tour Routes to help direct you to local trail sites. Enjoy!



Wagons transport emigrants with their household goods and Santa Fe Trail caravans haul tons of trade goods.

—from an illustration by Charles Goslin

Visiting the National Historic Trails Today

The map and photographs here are a sampling of the trail sites you can explore. For maps and further information about these trails, visit:

- Gardner Museum, Gardner
- Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm, Olathe
- Shawnee Mission, Fairway
- Trailside Center, Kansas City
- National Frontier Trails Museum, Independence

Trail Markers and Signs

Over time, many groups have placed signs and markers along the trails to indicate the location of trail sites, points of interest, and historic wagon ruts. In the early 1900s, the Daughters of the American Revolution installed granite markers along the Santa Fe Trail that are still visible today.

For Your Safety and Comfort

Many trail sites lack amenities such as water, food, or public restrooms; other facilities are available only in towns or developed areas. Be aware of potentially extreme weather conditions and the possibility of fire on the prairie. Leave domestic stock and wild animals alone. Keep pets under physical restraint at all times.

Land Ownership

The national historic trails traverse a mix of land ownership. Ask locally before entering private property. Some private landowners are graciously allowing visitors to enter their sites. Please remember to leave everything the way you found it. Owners retain the right to ask you to leave at any time. Obey posted signs, close gates behind you, use designated roads and parking areas, and stay only long enough to appreciate the trail resources.



- 1 Lone Elm**
A famous frontier trail campsite and rendezvous point, Lone Elm was used for almost four decades by thousands of Santa Fe traders and emigrants on the Oregon and California trails.



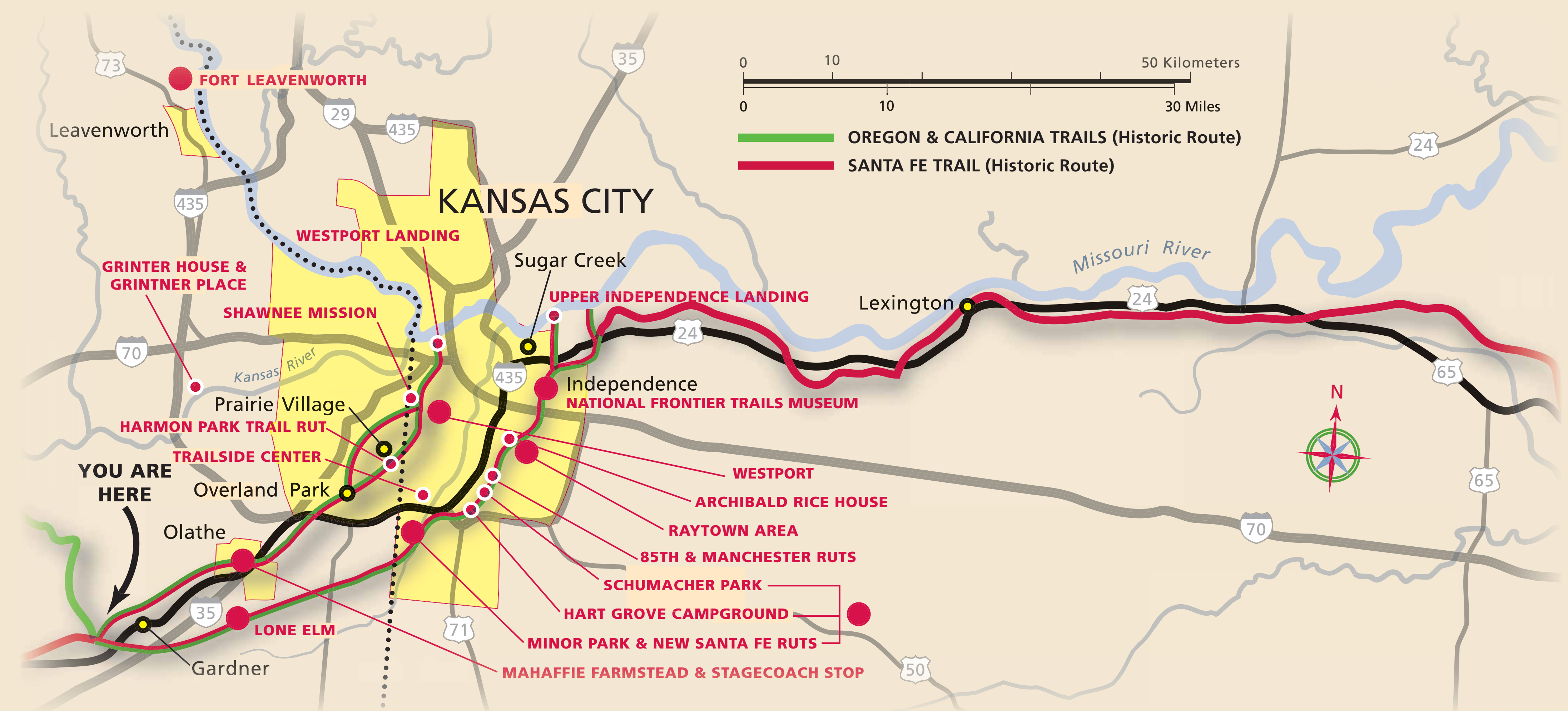
- 2 Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm**
The last remaining stagecoach stop on the historic Santa Fe Trail after it superseded Independence in the late 1840s to the early 1850s. A walking tour and trail sites, such as the Harris House pictured above, can be found here.



- 3 Westport**
Westport was a major point of embarkation on the Santa Fe Trail after it superseded Independence in the late 1840s to the early 1850s. A walking tour and trail sites, such as the Harris House pictured above, can be found here.



- 4 South Kansas City Sites**
Numerous historic sites related to all three trails can be explored in and around the city. The greenway path pictured above provides access to many of them.



- 5 Minor Park and New Santa Fe Ruts**
The 27-acre Minor Park preserves dramatic swales left behind as wagons crossed the Blue River. The cemetery at New Santa Fe also has some remnants of trail ruts.



- 6 Raytown Area**
The 85th and Manchester swale and the Archibald Rice Home, pictured above, are developed trail sites you can visit in Raytown.



- 7 Independence**
This city was a major outfitting point for emigrants and trail travelers. Many historic sites and buildings remain from trail days.



- 8 Fort Leavenworth**
Established in 1827 this fort is still an active military base. Many freighters, emigrants, and other trail travelers utilized the fort. Army troops based here provided protection along the routes.